

INSTRUCTIONS
TO
CHURCH-WARDENS
FOR THE
Better Discharge
OF THEIR
OFFICE.



L O N D O N,

Printed in the Year MDCCX.

LAST RATIONS

FOR THE
ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES

OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.
JANUARY 1, 1918

THE
CHIEF OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

INSTRUCTIONS

T O

Church-Wardens.

THE *Church-Wardens* are Officers by *Ecclesiastical* Authority, and sworn also to this very Trust to INFORM of the Vices of their Parish, that Scandals may be remov'd, and Immoralities and Ireligion punish'd by the Censures of the *Church*. Your Oath is, that "You shall well and truly execute the Office of a *Church-War-*
den in the Parish of ——— for the
 "ensuing Year, and to the best of your
 "Skill and Knowledge, PRESENT such
 "Persons and Things as are presentable
 "by the Ecclesiastical Laws of the Realm.
 And that you may know what Persons and Things *are* presentable by the Ecclesiastical Laws, you have often, I suppose, deliver'd to you, when you are sworn, a Book

Dr. Prideaux's Directions to Church-Wardens, pag. 17.

A 2 of

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of Articles, containing the Particulars of what the Church expects you should present upon that Oath you have taken. I shall nevertheless shew you from the *Canons*, (which are the Ecclesiastical Laws of *England*) and from the *Statutes*, the Power and Obligation of your Office (and consequently the special Matters you are sworn to inform of) with Respect to Vice, Prophaneness, and Immorality.

³ *Fac. i. c.* The Statute of King *James* the 1st. obliges the *Church-Wardens* (as well as Constables) to present once a Year, at the Quarter-Session of the Peace, all Monthly *Absenters from Church*; laying the same Penalty upon them of *twenty Shillings*, if they neglect, and allowing the same Reward of *forty Shillings*, if they discharge their Duty.

Can. 90. The 90th Canon enjoins *Church-Wardens*, and their Assistants, diligently to see that all their Parishoners duly resort to Church on *Sundays*, and there continue the whole Time of divine Service. All that neglect to come, (having no great or urgent Cause of Absence) are first to be admonish'd by you, and then, if they reform not, you are to present them. Upon this Article, observe, (1.) That a Person's being *absent* from his Parish-Church, (except he be known to be of ill Health, or gone

gone a Journey, or to be a profess'd Protestant Dissenter) is Ground sufficient for you to present him; it lies upon *him* to prove that he attended divine Service that Day at any other Church. The Act of Toleration has exempted *Dissenters*, and it would be vexatious and illegal to present them: But that Law was never design'd to favour *Atheists*, or such as pretending to be of the Church of *England*, frequent no publick Service at all. (2.) That you are not only to present Persons that *do not come* to Church, but also such as behave themselves *irreverently and indecently there*; either walking about, talking, or making any other Disturbance, or not continuing in the Church 'till divine Service and Sermon be fully ended. (3.) That the *Statute-Law*, 1 Eliz. c. 2. §. 14. as well as the *Canon*, obliges all, not only to resort to Church every *Sunday*, but to *abide there orderly and soberly* the whole Time of Service and Sermon, and for *any of these* Dr. Prideaux, p. 45. *Offences* above-mention'd, the Offender may have the Penalty of twelve Pence (according to the Statute of *Queen Eliz.*) serv'd on him, or be presented at the Visitation, to be punish'd by the Censures of the Church. (4.) That for being wholly absent from Church (without reasonable Excuse) on any Lord's-day, any *one Justice out of Session*, by another Statute, has Power to levy 3 Jac. I. c. 4. §. 27. that

that Penalty. (5.) That all such Persons may be dealt with the same Way, and are liable to the same Penalty, who (according to the scandalous Custom of too many) *despise* the publick Service, loiter away their Time in the Church-Yard, in the Fields, or in an Ale-house perhaps 'till the greatest part of it be over, and then come into the Church; for, by the Statute last referr'd, they are bound not only to resort every Sunday to some Church, but are there *to hear divine Service*, or else they forfeit as above.

By Canon 112. the Minister, *Church-Wardens*, and Assistants, shall yearly, within forty Days after *Easter*, exhibit to the Bishop or his Chancellor, the Names of all above the Age of sixteen Years within their Parish, that did not receive the Communion.

By the Statutes, *Church-Wardens* and
 4 Fac. 1. *Side-men*, (as well as Constables) are ex-
 c. 5. §. 7. pressly to be charg'd in the Oath of their
 21 Fac. 1. Office to present Offences of *Drunkenness*,
 c. 7. §. 5. *Tippling*, and publick Houses *suffering Persons to tipple* in them.

But the Canon has very much enlarg'd
 Can. 109. your Obligation, and bound you to inform
 of *all Manner of Vice*, Prophaneness, and
 Debauchery; "Requiring you FAITH-
 "FULLY to present ALL and EVERY
 " the

“ the Offenders in *Adultery, Whoredom,*
 “ *Incest, Drunkenness, prophane Swearing,*
 “ or any other *Uncleanness and Wickedness*
 “ *of Life,* that they and every of them
 “ may be punish’d by the Severity of the
 “ *Laws,* according to their Deserts. Here
 you see the Ecclesiastical Laws of the King-
 dom have made it Part of your Office (to
 which you are solemnly *sworn*) to inform
 not only of *Drunkenness and Tippling,* (as
 the Statutes also bind you) but of all Sorts
 of *Lewdness and Debauchery,* prophane
Swearing, and whatever else is contrary to
 Christian Piety and good Morals in your
 Parish; so that if you know any of your
 Parishioners (be his Quality or Circumstan-
 ces what they will) that is guilty of these,
 or any of these, you are oblig’d to present
 him at the next Visitation, or you are guilty
 your selves of PERJURY; and by the
 117th Canon, if you do wittingly and wil- Can. 117.
 lingly *omit* to present him, you are to be pro-
 ceeded against in the Ecclesiastical Courts,
 as for *wilful PERJURY,* and by the 26th Can. 26.
 Canon, to be *deharr’d the COMMUNION.*
 This last expresses such an *Abhorrence* of a
 Church-Warden’s Neglect in these Matters,
 that it forbids the Minister *in any wise* to
 admit you to that Sacrament, who, (to
 give it you in the Words of the Canon its
 self) *having taken your OATHS to present*

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all such publick Offences as you are particularly charg'd to enquire of in your several Parishes, shall (notwithstanding your said OATHS, and that your faithful discharging of them is the chief Means whereby publick Sins and Offences may be reform'd and punish'd) wittingly and willingly, DESPERATELY and IRRELIGIOUSLY incur the HORRID Crime of PERJURY, either in neglecting or refusing to present, &c.

Nay, farther, your Oath obliges you not only to inform of what you can present of *your own Knowledge* in those Matters, but also upon *common Fame*, if a Person be credibly and generally reported in the Neighbourhood to be a Swearer, a Drunkard, an Adulterer, a Fornicator, or any other way immoral or prophane, you are bound to present him, and thereby oblige him to clear himself if he can. If any well dispos'd Person advertise and give you Notice of any such Offender, and urge to present him, you are bound to have a Regard thereto, and to do it upon such Information and Advice: And if you wilfully neglect in either of these Cases, you are to be debarr'd the Communion, and prosecuted as before
 Can. 115. & 117. Dr. Prideaux, p. 1.
 Can. 116.
 Can. 26. || Dr. Prideaux, p. 2. || for Perjury.

By this Time I hope you are well satisfy'd both of the Extent of your Oath in Presentments of Vice and Prophaneness,
 and

and that you are severely *punishable* if you neglect them: You are to be driven away with Disgrace from the holy Table of the Lord, rejected as the most notorious Criminals, and prosecuted as perjur'd Wretches. And very good Reason there is for this Severity; for if you make nothing of breaking thro' a solemn OATH, you are presum'd to make as little of a Sacramental VOW; and if, by not duly presenting Offenders, you *encourage* them (as certainly you do) in their Wickedness, you share the Guilt of all their Crimes, and are justly chargeable before God and the World with the Scandal of them.

But that you may not complain of the *Difficulty* or *Charge* of making such Presentments, the Canon, (tho' it gives you *Liberty* to make them to the spiritual Courts as often as you will) does not *bind* you to make them oftener than twice a Year, (except in that of the *Bishop's* Visitation;) for which Presentments, the Register of any Court where they are to be exhibited, shall not receive in one Year above *Four Pence*, and for *voluntary* Presentments made *out of* Visitation-Times, no *Fee at all*; if he does, he shall upon Complaint be suspended from his Office for a Month for every such Extortion.

I will

I will only add, that in several Cases of Immorality and Prophaneness, you are equally concern'd with the Constable, to execute Warrants, and to punish Offenders.

1 Fac. I.
c. 9. §. 3.

As (1.) In levying the Penalty of *ten Shillings* upon Inn-keepers and Ale-house-keepers, suffering Persons to tipple in their Houses.

1 Car. I.
c. 1.

(2.) In levying the Penalty of three Shillings and four Pence for Sports and Pastimes on the Lord's-day; that of twenty

3 Car. I.
c. 1.

Shillings upon Carriers, Waggoners, Drivers, &c. travelling; and six Shillings and eight Pence upon Butchers, killing or selling Meat upon that Day; and of five

29 Car. 2.
c. 7.

Shillings upon such as prophane it by the Exercise of their Trades, or other worldly Labour thereupon.

21 Fac. I.
c. 20.

(3.) In levying the Penalty upon prophane Swearing and Cursing.

6 & 7 W.
3. c. 11.

(4.) You are the *only* Officers nominated by the Statutes to levy the Penalty of *twelve Pence* upon such as absent from Church, or behave themselves disorderly there. And,

1 Eliz. c.
2. §. 14.

3 Fac. I. c.
4 §. 27.

4 Fac. I. c.
4 §. 2, 4.

(5.) Tho' you are not oblig'd to *levy* the five Shillings for Drunkenness, and the three Shillings and four Pence for Tippling, yet the Money is to be *paid into your Hands* by the Offender, or by the Constable, for the Use of the Poor.

Your

Your Duty is the same with that of the Constables, concerning the Execution of Warrants, and disposing of the Money levy'd thereby; for you cannot but acknowledge, that where these Things are made by Law a Part of *your* Office as well as *their's*, your Oath (which is *well and truly to execute* your Office) obliges you to the same Care and Integrity as *they* are bound to.

And now, Gentlemen, having fully and fairly represented to you, from the Nature of your several Trusts or Offices, from the solemn Oaths you take to acquit yourselves faithfully in them, and from the Laws of the Kingdom, which expressly require it from you, that you ought to *inform of* such as are vicious, immoral, and prophane, and bring them to their deserv'd Punishment; give me leave in two or three Words to address my self to you all together.

The Constitution of *England* has taken a great deal of pious Care for the Suppression of Vice. We have very good *Laws* to punish it, and a settl'd residing Magistracy in all Counties, Cities, and Corporation-Towns, to *put them in Execution*; we have *Courts Ecclesiastical* frequently held, where Offenders may and ought to be prosecuted by the Discipline of the Church;

Church ; we have *Temporal* Courts of Justice also held in every County five or six times in the Year, (the *Affizes* and *Quarter-Sessions*) as well to punish the Prophane and Vicious, as to right the Injur'd. And because all this will be to little or no Purpose, without *Informations* given, there are *Constables* and *Church-Wardens* (two or three Men in every Parish) appointed by Law, and *sworn* to this very Service, constantly to inspect the Morals, and observe the Conversation of the Neighbourhood, and to make a just Report, upon their Oaths, of all Offenders within their District, that they may be brought to due Correction. But beside these Parish-Officers, who are a *standing Watch* upon Immorality, there is also at every Assize and Quarter-Session a *Grand Jury* sworn, consisting of twelve substantial Free-holders at least, to make the like Presentments, and amongst other Things, to present such *Constables* as have been negligent in their Duty. Were all these SWORN INFORMERS as careful and diligent in keeping their Oaths as they ought to be, a general Reformation of Manners would be no tedious or difficult Task, and private Persons would either *not need* to inform, or would be more generally *thank'd and applauded* (as they ought to be) when they do. But the cursed PER-
JURY

JURY of many, that have that solemn Trust and Oath upon them, renders other *voluntary* Informers absolutely necessary to the Suppression of Vice, and yet makes informing so strange and unusual a Thing, that it is look'd upon (tho' undeservedly) with Indignation and Contempt; while Wickedness triumphs in the Negligence and Perjury of those that should suppress it.

Tho' Perjury be a *horrid Sin*, yet horrid as it is, 'tis one of the *most prevailing Sins* in *England*. How many thousand Persons have we every Year *forsworn* in Parish-Offices and Session-Juries! I mean, as to those Particulars which I have been proving to be their Duty towards the Punishment of Vice. The most of them, I'm afraid, do look upon their Oaths as *Things of Course*, and little to be regarded, if we may judge by their After-practice; for 'tis plain the most of them do not act as if they thought themselves under any Obligation from them. But, Gentlemen, can there be any Thing in the World more sacred than an OATH? Is it not a solemn Appeal to GOD for your Sincerity in what you promise? And is not that Appeal an Acknowledgment that he will punish Falshood? Nay, farther, is it not a *calling down* the Curse and Vengeance of God upon your selves if you be false? Do you not,
by

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by laying your Hand upon the Gospels, declare in Effect, that *you hope for no Salvation by Christ* if you perform not, to the best of your Power, what you then promise? And do not the Words, *So help you GOD*, sufficiently prove, that the Intention of your Oath is so; and that you are to expect no Mercy or Favour from God, either in this World or the next, if you do not answer the Trust which is then and there committed to you, with an active, faithful Diligence? And do you not *personally* and *expresly* give your Consent to this heavy Curse, by *kissing the Book*? How then dare any of you venture to play with such an awful Engagement? Is it that you think the Oath of a *Parish-Officer*, or a *Grand Jury-Man*, is not as sacred and as binding as that of an *Evidence at the Bar*? What is it can make the Difference? The one appeals to God for his Sincerity and Fidelity in performing what he promises; the other for the Truth of what he is going to attest by way of Evidence; but both of them are equally Appeals to God, and Imprecations of his Vengeance upon wilful Perjury. The Scriptures, which have made it a Sin to *bear false Witness*, have made it the very same to break a *promissory Oath*. If a Man swear an Oath to bind his Soul with a Bond, he shall

shall not break his Word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his Mouth; that is, he shall exactly perform whatever he has engag'd to do. If you give in a false Evidence, you are unjust to your Neighbour: But if you are perjur'd in your Office, you are unjust to GOD, because 'tis for his Glory that you are to see that Vice be punish'd and suppress'd; you are injurious to your Neighbour too, by not doing what you might have done towards reclaiming him by a seasonable Correction, and promoting his eternal Happiness by Reformation; and you are treacherous to your Magistrates, and to your Country, who depend upon you to bring the Disorders of ill Men to Punishment.

Whatever you may think, it is a certain Truth, that whoever of you shall dare to neglect or falsify your Trust, with Respect to what you have sworn, and what your Country thereupon very justly expects from you, must be necessarily suppos'd either to believe no GOD, or not to believe that he concerns himself in the Affairs of the World, or boldly and impudently to DEFT his Vengeance; for if you either believ'd a God, or that he takes any Notice of what you say and do, or if you had any Fear of him, or any Reverence for him, you could not hope to escape

scape unpunish'd, when you have so solemnly and openly call'd upon him to revenge your Negligence and Perjury upon you, as by your Oath its self you do. Remember that terrible Declaration he has added to the *third* Commandment, — *The Lord will not hold him guiltless* (that is, he will certainly and severely punish him) *that taketh his Name*
Mal. 3. 5. in vain. I will come near to you in Judgment, says he in another Place, *and I will be a swift Witness against the Sorcerers, and against the Adulterers, and against the FALSE SWEARERS, &c.* If you will not be Witnesses (as you ought to be) against Vice, he will be a Witness against you, that you had taken a most sacred OATH to that Purpose, but took no Care to perform it. His Curse (as he elsewhere threatens) *shall enter into the House of him that SWEARETH FALSLY by his Name, and it shall remain in the Midst of his House, and shall consume it with the Timber thereof, and the Stones thereof. Temporal Judgments may, but HELL and EVERLASTING VENGEANCE will assuredly overtake the Perjur'd, if they prevent it not by a timely and severe Repentance.*

F I N I S.